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Autumn
2016

Berita

Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group
Association for Asian Studies

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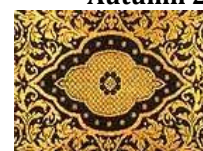
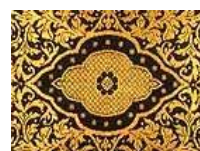
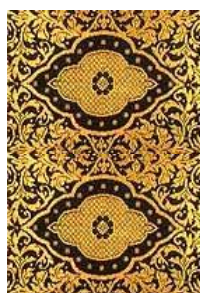
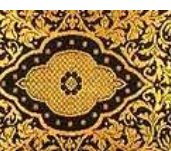
Chair's Address

The annual business meeting of the Malaysia Singapore Brunei (MSB) Studies Group was held in Seattle on April 1, 2016, in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies annual conference. The meeting was held on Friday morning, in a break from our tradition of Friday evening meetings. Part of the reason was to allow for a more comfortable, earlier group dinner on Friday evening. The meeting was well attended with approximately twenty participants. During the meeting, Dr. Shin Yee Koh was awarded the John Lent Prize for the best Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei related paper presented at the previous year's AAS conference. The full commendation for the paper is found later in this newsletter.

Several problems facing the MSB Studies Group were discussed during the April 2016 business meeting. First, in this year, no application was made for the Ronald Provencher Travel Grant. The Chair solicited applications through the group mailing list as well as the H-Asia listserv. When no applications were made through that solicitation, the Chair then sent the solicitation directly to all organizers of panels for the 2016 AAS conference, whose panels included MSB-content. Again, no applications were forthcoming. The view of the Chair is that the criteria for the award were too restrictive – only available to graduate students who were citizens of Malaysia, Singapore or Brunei, writing on one of the countries, and ideally coming to the AAS from the region. In light of this difficulty, it was moved and unanimously adopted that the criteria for the award be broadened. While priority will still be given to graduate students who are citizens of Malaysia, Singapore or Brunei, the award is now available to graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, adjuncts or independent scholars, either from the region or elsewhere. The objective is to provide more MSB-content at the AAS meetings and to support scholars who do not have institutional funding for conference travel.

A second problem discussed was miscommunication between the MSB and the AAS regarding MSB-sponsored panels at the AAS conference. Lack of clear guidelines and lines of communication led to a highly regarded panel, selected for inclusion by the MSB to be rejected by the AAS conference committee. In a series of emails between the MSB Chair and the AAS program committee, it became clear that the process for selecting sponsored panels needed improvements, which the Chair has urged the AAS to undertake. Despite these problems, the MSB did sponsor an impressive panel at the conference, a report on which is contained here.

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Finally, we continue to have trouble in finding editorial and production assistance to maintain this *Berita* newsletter for the group. Since 2015, the previous Chair took over these duties and as of yet we have not established a new editor or editorial team for the newsletter. I am hopeful that we can rectify this in the coming year, and expand the newsletter's contents.

Additional changes have been made to our group's communications this year. In mid-2016, the group's email listserv, the "msbforum," became a point of controversy again. A series of emails, not all of which went through the listserv nor to the Chair, led our former Chair to demand certain individuals be banned from the listserv and threatened "legal action" against the group and/or current Chair for not preventing "cyber-bullying" on the list. The longstanding list had been set up on a Central Michigan University server by Professor Elliot Parker. The list was not moderated and the Chair did not have any access to moderating or overseeing the list. The Chair and all of the MSB Studies Group are grateful to Professor Parker for maintaining the msbforum for nearly two decades.

In light of the unpleasantness and unacceptable ways in which the list was being used to attack colleagues, the Chair has established a new listserv through Google Groups, which can be used for communications of the group. To date the new list has not been very active, but we hope that it can become more active in the coming year. The Group is set up at present for communications (postings) to be distributed through email and not directly monitored. However, the Chair, as representative of the group, will reserve the right to block or ban users who abuse their privileges or abuse others through the service. The welcome page of the group contains a warning about cyberbullying. However, we must also maintain the ability to discuss "sensitive issues" – including race and religion – in this academic forum. The Google Group is set up so that all control over the group will be transferred to incoming Chair-Elects as they assume Chairing the MSB Studies Group. The Google Group should be accessible either by searching Google Groups for "msbforum" or through the following link:

Google Groups, "msbforum"; <https://groups.google.com/forum/?hl=en#!forum/msbforum>

At the same time, our former Chair has established a Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Facebook Group. It was previously proposed that all group communication be shifted to the Facebook Group. However, many members of the MSB Studies Group, including the current Chair, do not use Facebook. An effort was made to set up a Facebook profile specifically for the MSB Studies Group Chair, in order to interface with the Facebook Group. Our former Chair, as owner of the group, however, chose to ban that profile from the Facebook Group, essentially blocking out my attempts to stay abreast of communications on

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that platform. The MSB Facebook Group will continue to be run by our former Chair as his own private forum for discussing MSB matters but is not affiliated with the MSB Studies Group.

All of this has obviously made for a trying year. I look forward to working with our Deputy Chair Patricia Sloane-White and other members of the group to improve our communications and practices over the coming year. Our next business meeting will be held from 1.00pm to 2.30pm on Saturday, 18 March 2017, Roosevelt Room, Sheraton Center Toronto Hotel, in conjunction with the 2017 AAS Conference in Toronto. We will also have an informal group dinner on Saturday evening (details to be circulated prior to the conference and at the business meeting). I look forward to seeing all members who can attend in Toronto.

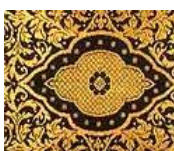
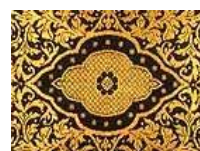
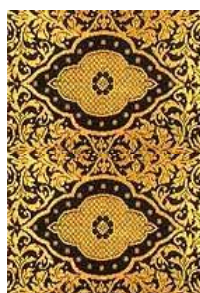
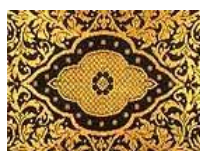
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Editor's Foreword

This issue of the *Berita* newsletter is a streamlined edition communicating the main annual business of the Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei Studies Group. The first item in the newsletter is the full commendation for Dr. Shin Yee Koh's paper "'Kampung Kirkby: Living (and Invoking) 1950s Malaya Across Space and Time," winner of the 2016 John Lent Prize for best paper presented at the previous Association for Asian Studies annual conference. This is followed by a report on the MSB-sponsored Panel, "After Decolonization," presented at the 2016 AAS Conference in Seattle. Finally, included is a list of all identifiable MSB-related panels for the upcoming 2017 AAS Conference in Toronto. Due to issues discussed above, the current newsletter is less extensive than in previous years. We are looking forward to further discussions on the direction of the newsletter in at our upcoming meeting in Toronto.

*Eric C. Thompson, National University of Singapore
Interim Editor*

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Prizes

John A. Lent Prize (2016, Seattle)

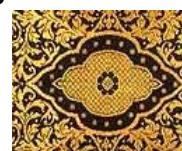
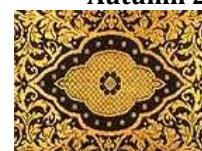
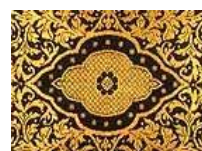
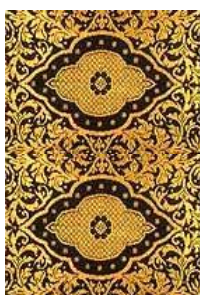
Prof. John A. Lent founded Berita in 1975, editing it for twenty-six years, and founded the Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group in 1976, serving as chair for eight years. He has been a university faculty member since 1960, in Malaysia, the Philippines, China, and various U.S. universities. From 1972-74, Prof. Lent was founding director of Malaysia's first university-level mass communications program at Universiti Sains Malaysia, and has been professor at Temple University since 1974.

Over the years, Prof. Lent has written monographs and many articles on Malaysian mass media, animation, and cartooning. He is the author and editor of seventy-one books and monographs, and hundreds of articles and book chapters. Since 1994, he has chaired the Asian Cinema Society and has been the editor of the journal Asian Cinema. He publishes and edits International Journal of Comic Art, which he started in 1999, and is chair of Asian Research Center on Animation and Comic Art and Asian-Pacific Association of Comic Art, both of which he established, and are located in China.

The Lent Prize Committee has selected a paper prizewinner for the 2016 Malaysia Singapore and Brunei study group Lent Prize. After careful consideration the Lent Prize Committee has agreed that Sin Yee Koh be awarded this year's Lent Prize for her paper "Kampung Kirkby: Living (and Invoking) 1950s Malaya Across Space and Time".

Sin Yee Koh's paper explores how the Kirkby College project positioned on the brink of the transition of Malaya from colonial holding to post-colonial state, influenced the development of particular understandings of British colonialism, post-colonial Malayan nationalism, multiculturalism and the purpose of education as a nation building tool for social progress. Koh investigates how nostalgia for and memory of the Kirkby College experience expressed by alumni in memoirs and instilled into generations of Malaysians through educational pedagogy continues to influence understandings of nationalism, multiculturalism, and education in contemporary Malaysia. In examining how, when, and why memories of Kampong Kirby are invoked, Sin Yee Koh's paper reveals how colonial narratives of race, geography, and development remain powerfully relevant in post-colonial Malaysia. After forging a collective identity through an educational space and in a place of significant privilege, Kampong Kirkby alumnae continue to articulate this legacy. Provocatively, Koh argues that nostalgia for and reminiscences of the colonial period can be usefully employed as a powerful force for social change in post-colonial contexts. Koh's discussion of the multiculturalism of Malayan nationalism also serves as a sobering contrast to the communalized nature of politics in Malaysia today.

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Panel Report

“After Decolonization”—A Panel Report

At the 2016 AAS meetings Juno Parrenas, Amali Ibrahim, and Rusalina Idrus presented papers on a panel titled “After Decolonization.” Daromir Rudnycky served as discussant. The papers formed a rich collection that spoke to issues of critical contemporary relevance in Southeast Asia today and spoke to the unfulfilled promises of liberalism.

The papers demonstrated how the paradox of liberalism reveals a hole in our political theory: specifically that the binaries between authoritarianism and liberalism, between freedom and constraint, and between sovereignty and citizenship do not accurately depict our political realities. In so doing, the papers blurred the boundary between authoritarianism and liberal democracy that is taken for granted in much recent scholarship, perhaps most notably in James Scott’s recent work *The Art of Not Being Governed*. Scott argues that upland Southeast Asia, or Zomia, is characterized by non-state spaces of freedom, whereas the lowlands are characterized by state domination. The papers pointed to an underlying tension in Scott’s opposition, not so much between upland and lowland, but rather between freedom and constraint that undergirds much contemporary political theory.

Amali Ibrahim identified what he termed “everyday authoritarianism” in Singapore which is intended to capture what he sees as the punitive inclinations of ordinary citizens toward their compatriots who openly mock the state.

Ibrahim saw evidence for everyday authoritarianism in the persecution of Amos Yee who was arrested for his blasphemies against Singapore’s revered founding Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew. What Ibrahim finds astounding is the fact that ordinary citizens inform on Yee, who is an otherwise somewhat pitiable, and perhaps pathetic, character. A central question asked by Ibrahim was how the state can be so successful in eliciting citizens who, of their own free will, report on each other’s desecrations.

Juno Parreñas’s inquiry into the enduring legacy of colonialism in Malaysia demonstrated that decolonization is not a discrete moment, but rather a process that is still ongoing and profoundly affects Sarawak’s politics today. She showed how the liberal promises of democracy and autonomy went unfulfilled in Sarawak through multiple deferrals in the project of decolonization. Juno identified three such deferrals. First, when Sarawak was promised self-governance by the Brooke family, only for political control to be transferred to the British crown following WWII. Subsequently, Sarawak was made an “internal colony of Malaysia”: the vast majority of its petro-wealth extracted by the peninsular metropole. But for Parrenas the deferral of decolonization underscored the natureculture of wildlife preservation. She provocatively suggests that the promise of deferred decolonization evident in peninsular Malaysia’s domination over Borneo, is mirrored at the Batu wildlife center, where the reserve set aside for orang-utans as an alternative to zoological captivity makes these animals dependent on “human intervention to survive.” While the preserve facilitates the illusion of autonomy, wildlife rangers such as her interlocutor Nadim, recognized that the primates are in fact in a state of “indefinitely

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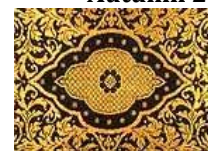


deferred independence.” Thus, the threat of extinction serves as the justification for a kind of captivity that masquerades as freedom.

Fear of the state’s security apparatus undergirds Rusalina Idrus’s analysis of youth who reject authoritarian control in state universities, by attempting to create alternative spaces for the enacting social critique and freedom of thought. The irony in Idrus’s account is heartbreaking: she traces the origins of this Buku Jalanan movement to the evacuation of liberal ideals from the academy as, complicit with the state’s neoliberal developmental objectives, universities are transformed into places for training “workers” rather than educating thinkers. Indeed, everyday authoritarianism seemed to capture the efficacy with which the state has been able to govern the mentality of Malaysian youth and the lecturers hired to educate them.

Thus, the papers collectively suggested an amendment to the political thought deployed in everything from analysis of Southeast Asian states to the current US primary debacle. The reigning political theory suggests a polar opposition between liberalism and authoritarianism as a structuring dualism for understanding contemporary political life, but the papers showed that this binary is perhaps not as useful as we might like to think. Thus, the authors highlighted the hybrid assemblage of liberalism and authoritarianism—inciting readers to vigilance against the totalitarianisms that lurk, ever-present just beneath the rosy glow of even the most heartfelt outward invocations of liberty.

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Association for Asian Studies 2017 (Toronto) – Panels with Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei Content

MSB Sponsored Panel

231. Democracy and Development at Risk: The Monetization of Politics in Malaysia.

Sat, March 18, 10:45am to 12:45pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 2nd Floor, Civic Ballroom South

Abstract

Electoral democracy and equitable development in Malaysia may be at risk because of money politics. This panel seeks to explain money politics in its different manifestations such as rent seeking, patronage politics, party capitalism and, in most recent years, open kleptocratic practices. The increasing monetization of politics has involved the use of the corporate sector and sovereign and national saving funds. The latter is epitomized by the 1MDB financial debacle which has seen losses of some USD13 billion from the country's coffers. This scandal involved investigations by at least five other national governments over offences from fraud to money laundering. What are the causes of this regressive slide towards kleptocracy? Has money politics intensified as the success of the ruling National Front coalition wanes over the last two general elections? Is Malaysia's system of ethnic democracy, one that favours Malay rule over other ethnic groups one of its origins? Panelists will examine political business in Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs), rent allocation through political patronage networks, and sovereign wealth funds as primary vehicles in entwining business and politics. Corruption and one-party dominance are linked to a conflict of the accumulation process, a weakening state (paper by Tan), the relegation of politics to short-term corporate

goals (paper by Elder), a financial concentration in the hands of the prime minister (paper by Gomez) and a more fragmented ethnic landscape which induces the monetization, rather than the manufacture of consensus (paper by Mohamad and Saravanamuttu).

Session Organizer

Johan Saravanamuttu, Nanyang Technological University

Chair

Meredith L. Weiss, State University of New York, Albany

Individual Submissions

State Accumulation, Patronage and Conflict in Malaysia - Jeff Tan, Aga Khan University

Stealing Time, Banking Like a State: Sovereign Wealth Funds in Malaysia and Beyond - Laura Elder, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame

Who Owns Corporate Malaysia Now? Politics, Money and Control of Government-Linked Investment Companies - Edmund Terence Gomez, University of Malaya

From Manufactured to Monetized Consensus: The Material Basis of One-Party Dominance - Maznah Mohamad, National University of Singapore; Johan Saravanamuttu, Nanyang Technological University

Discussant

Meredith L. Weiss, State University of New York, Albany

Additional Panels

1. International Media Governance and the Making of Asia in the Emergent Cold War

Thu, March 16, 7:30 to 9:30pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Mezzanine, Maple West

Abstract

After the Second World War, the victorious powers found the control and organization of communications media to be an immediate geopolitical problem traversing nation-state borders. As the cold war set in, “Asia” became the site of an intensifying propaganda contest between capitalist and socialist blocs. However, more than a competition between messages, this war for the “hearts and minds” of Asian populations by means of audiovisual media generated new forms of knowledge, concepts of listening and spectatorship, and practices of exhibition, which served to define patterns of media use for years to come.

This panel examines how international organizations such as UNESCO and the Western capitalist powers U.S. and Britain intervened in the postwar Asian mediascape through their campaigns for education, counterinsurgency, modernization and democratization. The case studies presented in each of the papers focus on understudied non-commercial media and evidences a shared framework of media governance, linked by institutional affiliations, information exchange, and common political aims. Hongwei Thorn Chen examines the conceptual genealogies that define peasant audiences in UNESCO’s media experiments in China on the eve of the cold war. Peter Bloom elaborates on the synchronization of information in the cold war media paradigm during the Malayan counter-insurgency campaigns of 1948-60. Hadi Gharabaghi narrows the focus to a single document, the US Information Agency’s “documentary bible,” which sought to create national profiles of Asian peasant spectators. Sueyoung Park-Primiano analyzes the USIA and UN’s use of motion pictures as a democratizing tool to shape citizenship and gender roles in South Korea.

Session Organizer

Hongwei Thorn Chen, University of Minnesota

Chair

Hongwei Thorn Chen, University of Minnesota

Individual Submissions

Peasant Perception and the Media of Fundamental Education in China - Hongwei Thorn Chen, University of Minnesota

Contingent Synchronizations of Media Affect: Staging the Malayan Emergency - Peter J. Bloom, University of California, Santa Barbara

Documentary and National Character: Planning USIA Training Films for Asia (1951) - Hadi Gharabaghi, New York University

Films of Freedom: The USIA, the UN, and the Democratizing of South Korea - Sueyoung Park-Primiano, Ithaca College

9. Governing Global Capitalism: State, Society, and Cultural Nationalism

Thu, March 16, 7:30 to 9:30pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Mezzanine, York

Abstract

This panel analyses the multi-level, iterative interactions between the imperatives of contemporary capitalism and state responses in the broader Bengal region, as it navigates global market forces that provide both new opportunities and impose heavy constraints. Drawing on their multidisciplinary backgrounds (in sociology, political science, and political economy), the four presenters explore how states under capitalist market forces govern and regulate specific economic sectors at the local and provincial levels, across a spectrum from direct state ownership and state promotion to private localism in global markets. Across all four runs the thread of provincial exceptionalism and “cultural nationalist” consumption, providing a window on the negotiation of economic development and the preservation of local “difference” in postcolonial societies. Two papers on West Bengal, India highlight the role of the state in successfully enhancing the power sector, but only tentatively halting the secular decline of the traditional textiles sector. The former strategically rejected all-India reform

models, while the latter mobilized “culture”, albeit in an ad hoc manner and against massive structural impediments. The other two papers are on the “food” sector and culinary culture of Bangladesh. The changing patterns of consumption at home and the global reach of Bangladeshi foods in Singapore and Abu Dhabi herald the country’s state policy toward food security and the mobilization of cultural nationalism to maintain a distinctive identity in distant lands. Together these papers provide a rare opportunity for theoretical conversation across the India-Bangladesh border, and emphasize the importance of inter-sectoral comparisons.

Session Organizer

Anthony D'Costa, University of Melbourne

Chair

Anthony D'Costa, University of Melbourne

Individual Submissions

Groping in the Dark: A Tentative Stalemate in West Bengal's Traditional Textiles - Anthony D'Costa, University of Melbourne

A Lonely Light: The Precarious Rise of the West Bengal Power Sector - Elizabeth Chatterjee, University of Chicago

The Globalization of Bangladeshi Food: Singapore and Abu Dhabi - Habibul H. Khondker, Zayed University

Rise of Agro Industries, Changes in Food Systems and the Making of a Culinary Culture in Bangladesh - Rokeya Akhter, Dhaka University

Discussant

Jennifer Jarman, Lakehead University

Un/Popular Sound in Colonial Asia

Thu, March 16, 7:30 to 9:30pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Mezzanine, Pine East

Abstract

What kind of role did sound play in the popular culture and everyday life in colonial Asia? How might scholars approach the diversified experiences of colonial modernity through mass acoustics? Considering “sound” as a cultural medium, this panel explores the production, circulation, and indigenization of popular and unwanted sound, and the ways in which the modern audible revealed or intervened with imperial forces in Asia, from U.S. colonial port cities along the Malay Peninsula, to Taiwan and Korea during Japanese rule.

Engaging issues related to popular sound and its “disturbances” in colonial Asia, this panel presents four papers from an interdisciplinary perspective that intersects with fields of ethnomusicology, cultural anthropology, film and media studies, and history. Fritz Schenker traces the migration of Filipino musicians from the 1880s to the 1910s to scrutinize a musical circulation along Malay Peninsula that exceeded formal colonial borders. Jennifer Hsieh examines the historical conception of “noise” as an imperial project of modernization in Japanese colonial Taiwan and the ways in which problems of noise were appropriated by scientific rationales. Also on colonial Taiwan, Laura Wen investigates how the culture of cinema and gramophone records converged and activated a soundscape that was all at once modernist, popular, and potentially anticolonial. Hye Eun Choi discusses how transnational record companies’ competition for market share engendered autonomous spaces for Korean production of SP records. Together, these papers reflect how audible—seemingly borderless sounds—become the sources for the production of boundaries and control categories for imperial projects, transnational market rule, and domestic appropriations.

Session Organizer

Laura Jo-Han Wen, Washington University in St. Louis

Chair

E. Taylor Atkins, Northern Illinois University

Individual Submissions

"Manila Bandsmen": Musical Migrations and Imperial Histories - Fritz Schenker, Washington University in St. Louis

From "Noisy Disturbances" to "Noise Control": Acoustic Modernity in Colonial Taiwan - Jennifer Hsieh, Stanford University

Cinema, Gramophone Records, and Sonic Modernity in Colonial Taiwan - Laura Jo-Han Wen, Washington University in St. Louis

Munye-bu and Korean Record Production in the 1930s - Hye Eun Choi, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Discussant

E. Taylor Atkins, Northern Illinois University

37. Contextualizing Migrant Rights and Border-Crossing in Asian Illiberal Immigration Regimes

Fri, March 17, 10:30am to 12:30pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 2nd Floor, Churchill

Abstract

The aim of this panel is to contextualize the landscapes of migrant rights in Asia by comparing the three major migrant-receiving countries in the region: Japan, Thailand, and Singapore. Studies of migration have increasingly highlighted a moral gap in migrant rights that is characterized by a fundamental discrepancy between the inclusive humanitarian ideologies pushed by non-state actors and states' discriminatory and exclusive attitude toward migrants. This moral gap is widening in East

and Southeast Asia due to the tension between illiberal nationalism and emerging non-state actors advocating migrant rights.

This panel will engage with this emerging moral tension in Asia by contextualizing the political, social, and cultural processes in which migrant rights and experiences of border-crossings are shaped. The panel comprises anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists from universities in Asia and North America whose work is rooted in ethnography. In the first paper, Lara Chen examines the effects of transnational advocacy networks on stateless rights, focusing on Japan and Thailand. In the second paper, Kazue Takamura analyzes and documents the role of NGOs in addressing the political and social rights of detained migrants in Japan. In the third paper, Kyoko Kusakabe discusses the gendered aspect of migrant rights, focusing especially on the reproductive rights of migrant garment workers in a Special Economic Zone in northern Thailand. The final paper by Saroja Dorairajoo addresses the political effects of race and class in terms of regulating migrant rights and social behavior in Singapore's authoritarian regime.

Session Organizer

Kazue Takamura, McGill University

Chair

Apichai W. Shipper, U.S. Department of State

Individual Submissions

Trans-Border and Interdisciplinary Collaboration on Statelessness in Japan and Thailand - Tien-shi Lara Chen, Waseda University

Advocates for Detained Migrants: The Role of Pro-Migrant Civic Groups in Japan - Kazue Takamura, McGill University

Migrant Workers in Special Economic Zones: Women Garment Workers and Their Social Reproduction - Kyoko Kusakabe, Asian Institute of Technology

Bloody Indians, Bloody Alcoholics, Bloody Violent: Race and Class in the Construction of Migrant Workers in Singapore - Saroja Dorairajoo, National University of Singapore

Discussant

Apichai W. Shipper, U.S. Department of State

95. Beyond the Mainland: Buddhism and Mobility in Maritime Southeast Asia

Fri, March 17, 12:45 to 2:45pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 4th Floor, Forest Hill

Abstract

Mention "Southeast Asian Buddhism" and what comes to mind is often Theravāda Buddhism, the dominant religion in the mainland Southeast Asian states of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, and the Mahāyāna Buddhism in Vietnam. Recent scholarship has started to pay more attention to the presence of Buddhism in the Islamic Malay world, Catholic Philippines, and the Chinese-majority Singapore. This panel aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation by analyzing the varied forms of Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia. Whereas most studies of Buddhism in Southeast Asia have focused on the mainland, the papers in this panel place emphasis on Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia, and its transnational connections with mainland Southeast Asia, China, Taiwan, and beyond. Wenxue Zhang uses the case of Zhuandao to analyze the Buddhist networks and brotherhood ties between China and Singapore in the first half of twentieth century. Jack Meng-Tat Chia discusses Ashin Jinarakkhita's Buddhayāna movement in postcolonial Indonesia, and argues that the monk's reform of Buddhist teachings was a calculated strategy to ensure the survival of Buddhism in Muslim-majority Indonesia. Yu-Chen Li examines the transnational religious career of Malaysian Chinese monk, Chi Chern, who is a significant figure in the globalization of Taiwanese Buddhism. Manuel Sapidula investigates the appropriation of Buddhist-inspired meditation

practices, and accounts for the emergence of religious pluralism in present-day Philippines. Justin McDaniel will comment on these papers in the light of his research on Buddhism in Southeast Asian societies.

Session Organizer

Jack Meng-Tat Chia, Cornell University

Chair

Justin T. McDaniel, University of Pennsylvania

Individual Submissions

Spreading Buddhism across the Seas: Zhuandao in Singapore - Wenxue Zhang, Institute for Philanthropy Tsinghua University

Nusantara's Dharma: Ashin Jinarakkhita and the Buddhayāna Movement - Jack Meng-Tat Chia, Cornell University

Teaching Meditation in Malaysia, Taiwan, and America: The Transnational Career of Venerable Chi Chern - Yu-chen Li, National Chengchi University

Buddhist Meditation and Emerging Pluralism in the Philippines - Manuel Victor Jamias Sapidula, University of the Philippines, Diliman

Discussant

Justin T. McDaniel, University of Pennsylvania

96. Divisive Politics of Southeast Asia

Fri, March 17, 12:45 to 2:45pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 4th Floor, Rosedale

Abstract

Over the last ten years Freedom House has reported a weakening of democratic practices and rights throughout the world. Southeast Asia is no exception. From relatively democratic countries like Indonesia, to less free states like Malaysia and Singapore, to now profoundly unfree states like Thailand; we see increases in state repression, increases in divisive politics,

and democratization seemingly further from reach than ever before. The papers on this panel provide us an in-depth look at the mechanisms and drivers of these changes. The common theme here is how power holders use divisive politics and coercion to thwart greater openness, inclusiveness, and the circulation of elites. Sitthi provides us with an understanding of how the Thai coup has used a variety of tactics to repress and squash both the Redshirt opposition and other critics of the putsch. Murphy and Ostwald's papers reopen the discussion about the relationship between elections and identity politics. Finally, Dettman's paper examines how an opposition party tries to win power in Malaysia's highly rigged system. Conclusions can be drawn from these papers about the weaknesses and pitfalls of democracy and the obstacles faced by opposition groups in undemocratic states. These papers will contribute to our understanding of the inner workings of democratic and nondemocratic states in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Session Organizer

Amy L. Freedman, Long Island University

Chair

Amy L. Freedman, Long Island University

Individual Submissions

The Coup and Crisis: The 2014 Military Coup D'Etat and the Redshirt Movement in Thailand - Khajornsak Sitthi, University of Leeds

Anti-Foreign Nationalism in Indonesian Elections and Policy - Ann Marie Murphy, Seton Hall University

The Oppositional Dilemma: Opposition Party Strategy and Democratic Reform in Malaysia - Sebastian Dettman, Cornell University

Elections and Ethnic Tension in Malaysia and Singapore - Kai Ostwald, University of British Columbia

Discussant

Amy L. Freedman, Long Island University

The State and Religious Actors in South Asia and Southeast Asia: Differing Motivations and Implications

Fri, March 17, 5:15 to 7:15pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 2nd Floor, Mackenzie

Abstract

This panel explores the interactions between the representatives of state institutions, religious actors and related external forces in Muslim-majority countries in South and Southeast Asia, as well as regional countries with significant Muslim minority communities; it elucidates each actors' differing motivations, strategies and forms of interactions; and considers the resultant societal and policy implications. In this regard, religious actors, which include both state-affiliated and unaffiliated theologians, religion-based civil society organizations, religious-oriented political parties and foreign religious actors, play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between the state and citizens of differing religious faiths. This role is particularly important given that faith adherents often turn to the religious actors, who are perceived to hold religious legitimacy, for guidance on contentious socio-religious issues that are expressed in the public sphere. Taking into account the wide array of religious actors with differing ideological orientations (even within the same faith) and the concomitant effect of transnational religious influences, the panel examines the factors that can lead to instances of either cooperative or antagonistic interactions between the state and the different religious actors. Through the empirical examples provided in the papers of this panel, we seek to answer fundamental questions on how these particular forms of interactions can influence the positive or negative ways in which local and foreign religious actors function in the public and political spheres; the ways in which these interactions affect different segments of society

from the religious to the areligious; and the similarities and dissimilarities across the regions studied.

Session Organizer

Saleena Saleem, Nanyang Technological University

Chair

Saleena Saleem, Nanyang Technological University

Individual Submissions

The State and Religion in Southern Thailand: Between Co-optation and Resistance - Walid Jumblatt Abdullah, King's College, London and National University of Singapore

The State and Religion in Malaysia: Religious Conservatism and Muslim Women Activism - Saleena Saleem, Nanyang Technological University

The State and Religion in Southeast Asia: Local Christian Theologians on Islam and Politics - Benjamin Pwee, Pwee Foundation

Creating Frankenstein: The Impact of Saudi Export of Ultra-Conservatism in South Asia - James M. Dorsey, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, NTU /University of Würzburg, Institute for Fan Culture

Discussant

Omar Farouk Bajunid, Universiti Sains Malaysia

117. Governing Intimate Encounters in South and Southeast Asia: Body, Sexuality, Gender, Everyday Life and Colonial/Post-Colonial Law

Fri, March 17, 3:00 to 5:00pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Mezzanine, Pine East

Abstract

Studies concerning intimate relations between the colonizers and colonized have flourished for

a long time now. Such historiography focuses on the black-white paradigm of racial interactions and intimacies. There is still a wide field to be explored about intimate relations amongst the colonized subjects. It is imperative to deepen the studies on how intimate relations amongst the colonized subjects evolved, how the colonial administration regulated them and in the process it allows us to deepen our understanding of how the colonial legacies of controlling intimate relations continue in legal/social structures in many post-colonial societies. Domestic spaces, intimacies of everyday life and colonized bodies were the sites wherein subjectivity and sexuality of the colonial subjects were regulated and governed. Simultaneously, these intimate and domestic spaces, intimate relationship in everyday and performance of such intimacies created spaces and a voice for the colonized to articulate their desires, anxieties and resilience when they came to be discussed in public places. Papers in this panel proposes three sites and temporal moments, body, everyday, intimate relationships, through which both regulation and recovery (of voices) were/are, articulated in colonial and post-colonial times, wherein citizenships, sexuality, labour, health and immigration policies were debated, implemented and contested. The interdisciplinary papers ask: What is the relationship between body and everyday with sexual citizenship? How were intimate spaces related to colonial regulation of labour, health and sexuality? What forms of governance and regulatory legal forms (dis)continue from colonial to post-colonial states in regulating the intimate relationships of colonial and post-colonial subjects? What do these tell about the regulation of intimacy, body in relation to voice, resilience, governance, sexuality and citizenship from colonial time to present times?

Session Organizer

Arunima Datta, National University of Singapore

Chair

Barbara Watson Andaya, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Individual Submissions

Discomforting the State: Minority Women's Labor, Reproductive Capacity and Sexuality in Postwar Sri Lanka - Mythri Jegathesan, Santa Clara University

Regulating Intimacies and Sexual Citizenships: A Comparative Perspective between Colonial and Immigration Courts Cases on Sri Lankan Tamil Marriages - Sidharthan Maunaguru, National University of Singapore

Entangled Colonial Histories: Colonial Law and "Coolie" Intimacies in Twentieth-Century Malaya and Ceylon - Arunima Datta, National University of Singapore

Importing Gendered Legal Reasoning from England: Wife Murders in Early Colonial India, 1805-1857 - Daniel J.R. Grey, Plymouth University

Discussant

Barbara Watson Andaya, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

173. Men on the Move: Rethinking Gender and Sexuality in/through Migration in Asia

Sat, March 18, 8:30 to 10:30am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Concourse Level, VIP Room

Abstract

Increased migration around the world, and in the Asian region in particular, has seen a growing pool of studies that attempts to examine the practices, processes, and consequences of human mobility. While female migrants have been given much attention in studies that address the gendered aspects of migration, (e.g. Yeoh and Huang 2010; Hoang 2015; Lan 2006; Chin 1998; Friedman 2010, 2014; Collins, Lai and Yeoh 2013), male migrants—and the negotiation of

their identities in and through migration—remain an understudied topic.

In this panel, we focus on those male sojourners that have been left out of mainstream migration studies, namely higher-wage male Chinese workers in Singapore, middle-class gay men in Hong Kong, and Japanese transgender men in Thailand. Through an exploration of the gender, sexual, racial and class issues faced by male migrants travelling into, within and/or out of Asia, we seek to bring gender and sexuality studies into a deeper conversation with migration studies. We argue that with the increasing academic and social interests in the flows of capital, culture and people into/across/out of the Asian region, it is ever more imperative now to account for the lives of these highly mobile migrant-travellers who cross multiple boundaries—geo-political, ideological, gender, sexual—simultaneously. In doing so, we seek to contribute to a more critical understanding of the politics of Asian migration in the “Asian century”.

The panel chair will facilitate the Q&A/discussion session by inviting a rethinking of the place of men and masculinity in Asian migration studies.

Session Organizer

Shu Min Yuen, National University of Singapore

Chair

Shu Min Yuen, National University of Singapore

Individual Submissions

Queer Globality and the Hong Kong Middle-Class Gay Men: Rearticulating through Transnational Migration - Ting-Fai Yu, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Intersections of Gender and Geographical Border-Crossings: The Case of Female-to-Male Transpeople in Japan - Shu Min Yuen, National University of Singapore

“I Have Permanent Residency”: Higher-Wage Migrant Men's Imaginaries of Chinese

Masculinities in Singapore - Sylvia Ang,
University of Melbourne

192. Religious Spaces, Identities, and Transformations in Southeast Asia

Sat, March 18, 8:30 to 10:30am, Sheraton Centre
Toronto Hotel, 4th Floor, Forest Hill

Session Organizer

George Dutton, University of California, Los
Angeles

Chair

George Dutton, University of California, Los
Angeles

Individual Submissions

Christian Political and Social Responses to
Increasing Islamization in Malaysia - David Guo
Xiong Han, S. Rajaratnam School of
International Studies (RSIS)

Female Patronage of Religious Space in 19th-
Century Nanyang: A Case Study on Chinese
Sectarian Vegetarian Halls in Singapore - Ying
Ruo Show, National University of Singapore

Nationalist Transformations: Music, Ritual, and
the Work of Memory in Cambodia and Thailand
- Jeffrey M. Dyer, Boston University

The Ambivalent Cultural Capital of Trance and
Ecstasy: The Stigma of Possession in Thai
Buddhism - Erick D. White, Cornell University

The Monk who was a Woman: Quan Am Thi
Kinh and the Domestication of Buddhism in
Vietnam - Cuong Mai, Appalachian State
University

The Secret Life of Grief: Theorizing Emotion in Chinese Societies

Sat, March 18, 10:45am to 12:45pm, Sheraton
Centre Toronto Hotel, 2nd Floor, Roosevelt

Abstract

The study of the emotions provides multiple theoretical challenges. Historians often struggle to locate the emotions within the historical record, particularly when working with archival materials that seem, initially at least, to reveal little about the inner life. Early anthropologists frequently neglected the emotions, viewing them as falling beyond their academic purview. Further, while recent scholarship on affect and subjectivity prompts a reimagining of the intricate connection between the emotions and public life, much of this literature focuses on mental illness—on the troubled psyche—saying little about more ordinary sensibilities.

In this interdisciplinary panel we explore the nature of grief, prompted by its very ordinariness: the fact that almost every person will experience it, for all that it feels extraordinary to the person who faces loss. Drawing on examples from contemporary funeral businesses in Singapore and Shanghai, from urbanizing Shanghai (1865-1949) and from the Middle and Late Qing, we consider a number of questions: How did Qing parents mourn their infants in light of prescriptive ritual texts that discouraged such grieving? Can we find “genuine” feeling in the state archive? How, in Chinese contexts, did discreet tears come to replace the amplified laments of professional wailers? What are the consequences of such change? Why should “modern” Singaporeans, now “cry like Protestants?” Broadly, we ask: how malleable are intense emotions, grieving, longing, forgetting, love? How do emotions change over time? And how best should scholars theorize them?

Session Organizers

Ruth E. Toulson, Maryland Institute College of
Arts

Huwy-min Lucia Liu, Hong Kong University of
Science and Technology

Chair

Huwy-min Lucia Liu, Hong Kong University of
Science and Technology

Individual Submissions

Lost and Found: Mourning the Infant Dead in Late Imperial China - Jeffrey Snyder-Reinke, College of Idaho

Impersonal History: Death, Grief, and Emotions in Modern Shanghai - Christian Henriot, Aix-Marseille University

The Authenticity of Tears: Transforming Grief in a Singaporean Funeral Parlor - Ruth E. Toulson, Maryland Institute College of Arts

Tears of Grief in Contemporary Shanghai Death Ritual - Huwy-min Lucia Liu, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Discussant

Haiyan Lee, Stanford University

215. Interspecies Intimacy: Evolving Human-Animal Socialities in Asia

Sat, March 18, 10:45am to 12:45pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Concourse Level, VIP Room

Abstract

Paying by the hour to spend time with a cat in Japan, wildlife rehabilitators training apes to fear people in Malaysia, theorizing human-animal ethics through Buddhism in the Republican Era of China, and purchasing a cat while countless strays wander the streets in Japan— scholarship on the intimate relationships between humans and animals is making it increasingly clear that the affective bonds between people and their non-human companions are more complex than the master-pet dichotomy, as Yi-Fu Tuan (1984) famously argued. Our inter-area/border-crossing panel focuses on the intimate relationships people have with non-human animals and aims to explore the connection between broader social developments in Asia, especially in relation to issues of sociality, affect or intimacy. These papers draw an

understanding of intimacy from an array of Asianists (Dave 2014; Nguyen 2014; Parrenas, Thai and Silvey 2016; Stoler 2002; Wilson 2004) to explore the cultures within these relationships with animals develop. This panel argues that understanding a region necessitates an understanding of the kinds of intimate relations people have with others, including non-human others, encompassing qualities of bonding and family, and at the same time, issues of exploitation, commoditization and domination. Building on cross-historical research focused on human-animal relations bounded within specific regions, such as Pflugfelder and Walker's (2005) *Japanimals* and Robert Cribb., Helen Gilbert, and Helen Tiffin's (2014) cultural history of the orangutan that is endemic to present-day Indonesia and Malaysia, this panel kindles connections across regional borders to develop new trajectories in the ever-expanding "animal turn" in Asia.

Session Organizers

Amanda Robinson, University of Pittsburgh
Seven Mattes, Michigan State University

Chair

Amanda Robinson, University of Pittsburgh

Individual Submissions

Kawaii Pets and Animal Abandonment in Japan - Seven Mattes, Michigan State University

Paid Companions: Human-Animal Bonds in Japanese Cat Cafés - Amanda Robinson, University of Pittsburgh

The Politics of Interspecies Affects: Writing Half-Humans in the Case of Lü Bicheng, 1920s-1940s - Xi Chen, University of Toronto

The Interspecific Work of Care: Intimacy and Vulnerability in Orangutan Rehabilitation on Borneo - Juno Salazar Parrenas, Ohio State University

Discussant

Naisargi Dave, University of Toronto

Types and Effects of Electoral Malpractice in Southeast Asia

Sat, March 18, 3:00 to 5:00pm, Sheraton Centre
Toronto Hotel, 4th Floor, Forest Hill

Abstract

Current literature on electoral malpractice typically highlights ballot rigging, vote count irregularities or illegal acts that occur on the polling day. Less is said about the manipulation of rules before election or their effects. Electoral malpractice can occur in all stages of the electoral cycle and affect electoral competition, representation and participation. As Birch's work shows, electoral malpractice can manifest through: 1) the manipulation of rules; 2) the manipulation of voters, or 3) manipulation of voting process. This panel adopts qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine how electoral misconduct pre-and post-election affects candidates, parties and voters in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. To begin with, P. Chambers (Chiang Mai) and N. Waitoolkiat's (Naresuan) study on Thailand traces the evolution of electoral corruption and examine how the lack of enforcement of rules governing campaign funds affects democracy. Given the regular occurrence of gerrymandering before every election in Singapore, G. Riambau (Yale-NUS) examines how pre-electoral boundary changes in pro and anti-government electoral districts affect housing prices in the last four decades. On the other hand, R. Toha (Yale-NUS) and S. Harish (NYU) considers how a particular of electoral violence – candidate-targeted violence - reduces the number of competitors in 2005-2011 elections in Indonesia. Finally, adopting the tools of election forensic, M. Davidson (UCSD) investigates the occurrence of electoral fraud in the 2004 presidential election and their effects on candidates and political parties in the Philippines. A. Hicken (Michigan) will discuss the papers while N.Tan (McMaster) will chair the panel.

Session Organizer

Netina Tan, McMaster University

Chair

Netina Tan, McMaster University

Individual Submissions

Does the Color of the Local District Incumbent affect Housing Prices? Evidence from Singapore - Guillem Riambau Armet, Yale-NUS College

Forms of Pre-Electoral Violence: New Micro-Level Evidence from Indonesia - Risa Toha, Yale-NUS College; Harish S.P., New York University

Using Election Forensics to Detect Fraud and Strategic Behavior in the Philippines - Allen D. Hicken, University of Michigan

Gerrymandering in Singapore - Netina Tan, McMaster University

Discussant

Allen D. Hicken, University of Michigan

256. Challenging Authoritarianism in East and Southeast Asia

Sat, March 18, 3:00 to 5:00pm, Sheraton Centre
Toronto Hotel, Mezzanine, Pine West

Abstract

Authoritarianism continues to thrive in Asia. Hegemonic parties, military juntas, and sultanistic dictators across the region repress the masses, censor the media, and manipulate elections to maintain their grip on power. Against such a backdrop of enduring tyranny, when and how do various social and political actors challenge authoritarian rule? What explains the variation in the outcomes of contestation between opposition forces and authoritarian states? This inter-area and inter-disciplinary panel aims to address these crucial questions from both contemporary and historical perspectives. Towards that end, it brings

together a diverse range of scholars from East Asian studies, political science, and sociology studying authoritarianism and democratization in Northeast Asia (China and South Korea) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore). Collectively, these papers demonstrate that the processes and outcomes of political contestation in Asia are contingent upon a range of factors and different actors inside and outside of the political arena. The papers examine Singapore's politically acquiescent middle class (Kuhonta), concentration of opposition power and its consequences on contesting for free and fair elections across Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore (Ong), divergent effects of multiparty elections on anti-regime protest in authoritarian South Korea (Cho), and the evolution of protest dynamics and state-society relations in contemporary China (Chen). Taken together, these papers provide original research and insights that contribute to the current academic and policy debates on the resilience of authoritarianism as well as prospects for democratization and democratic consolidation in the region.

Session Organizer

Joan E. Cho, Wesleyan University

Chair

Nara Dillon, Harvard University

Individual Submissions

A Protest Society Evaluated: Popular Protest in China, 2000-2015 - Chih-Jou Jay Chen, Academia Sinica

Do Authoritarian Elections Mobilize or Demobilize Protest? Theory and Evidence from South Korea - Joan E. Cho, Wesleyan University

Exceptional Engineering: Singapore's Politically Acquiescent Middle Class - Erik M. Kuhonta, McGill University

Electoral Manipulation, Opposition Power, and Institutional Change: Contesting for EMB

Reform in Singapore, Malaysia, and Cambodia - Jiayun Elvin Ong, Emory University

Discussants

Sheena Chestnut Greitens, University of Missouri

Nara Dillon, Harvard University

257. Inter-Asian Literature between Colonial Modernism and Neoliberal Globalization

Sat, March 18, 3:00 to 5:00pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 2nd Floor, Kenora

Abstract

This panel cuts across the geographical divisions of Northeast, South, and Southeast Asia to ask how “Asia”—as both regional imaginary and methodology—functions as a category operating between the scales of national literatures and global or “world” literature. Bringing together early and mid-career scholars working in literature and cultural studies, we interrogate constructions of inter- and intra-Asia imaginaries—from early twentieth-century modernist novels to the most recent cultural iterations of “Global Asia”—to foster discussion of possibilities for new border-crossing scholarship.

We begin in the early twentieth century, with Lahiri's argument that the rickshaw novels of Chinese writer Lao She and Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand illustrate an “Asian modernist literature” working between Chinese and Indian modernisms on the one hand, and a “global” modernism on the other. Leong interrogates the practical question of teaching “Asian literary modernism” in the classroom, arguing that canonical “madness narratives” in modern Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Urdu literatures provide a basis for understanding “Asia as method.” Watson narrates how the category of “Asian literature” was mobilized during the Cold War by PEN International, only to be challenged by Filipino writing against the U.S. backed Marcos dictatorship. Naruse's paper brings us to the contemporary moment, arguing

that Singapore's self-repositioning as hub of "Global Asia" demands renewed attention to depictions of intra-Asian labor migration, particularly from the Philippines and Bangladesh. Our discussant will be Leo Ching (Duke), who has made crucial contributions to the theorization of the national, regional and global in Asia.

Session Organizers

Andrew W. Leong, Northwestern University
Madhumita Lahiri, University of Michigan

Chair

Madhumita Lahiri, University of Michigan

Individual Submissions

Modernism "in Asia": India, China, and the Rickshaw Novel - Madhumita Lahiri, University of Michigan

The Madness of Teaching "Asia as Method" - Andrew W. Leong, Northwestern University

The Prison and the PEN: Dictatorship Literature and PEN International in Asia - Jini Kim Kim Watson, New York University

Singapore's "Global Asia": Literary Imaginings of Neoliberal Nationalism - Cheryl Narumi Naruse, University of Dayton

Discussant

Leo Tsushin Ching, Duke University

296. (Mis-)Leading Religion and Politics: Islamization(s) in South and Southeast Asia

Sat, March 18, 5:15 to 7:15pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 2nd Floor, Kent

Abstract

This panel adopts a comparative lens in order to explore the political and epistemological heterogeneity of Islamization. Although, broadly speaking, the concept of Islamization is often defined as the increasing presence of Islam

in the public and private spheres, and its interplay with politics, the process's meanings and underlying mechanisms of articulation are highly varied because they are contextually contingent. The panel highlights how Islamization has been distinctly interpreted and applied in two directions - top-down and bottom-up. On the one hand, programs of Islamization may at times be employed by state actors as a political strategy meant to strengthen the state's legitimacy. Malaysia and Brunei represent relevant examples of this top-down articulation of Islamization. In other Asian settings, however, certain non-state actors have promoted Islamization in striking contrast to official understandings, as a means of challenging the status quo or, alternately, justifying radical contention or even violence. In Indonesia, non-state actors endow Islamization with universal and sometimes even progressive value contours, while in India home-grown Islamist extremist factions have employed Islamization as a justification to wage violence against a seemingly oppressive Hindu majoritarian state. In Malaysia, fringe social groupings emerged in response to the government's politicization of Islam which is misconceived as a semiotic and ideological quest for the "right" Islam. This panel brings together junior and senior scholars of Islam in Asia, and it encourages cross-generational, cross-field, and cross-disciplinary perspectives on an issue of great scholarly and policy importance.

Session Organizer

Aida M. Arosoaie, RSIS, NTU

Chair

Aida M. Arosoaie, RSIS, NTU

Individual Submissions

The Bureaucratization of Islam and Its Socio-Legal Dimensions in Southeast Asia: Outlines of a Collaborative Research Project - Dominik M. Müller, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

Which Islamization? According to Whom? Varieties of Shariah Normativization in Indonesia Today - Robert W. Hefner, Boston University

Islamizing the Law in Malaysia - Kerstin Steiner, Monash University

Righteousness and Honour: Bottom-Up Islamization in Malaysia and India - Aida M. Arosoaie, RSIS, NTU

Discussant
Patricia Sloane-White, University of Delaware

314. Stoking Hate: Understanding Sectarianism in Muslim Countries and within Muslim Communities in Asia

Sun, March 19, 8:30 to 10:30am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Mezzanine, Maple East

Abstract

Sectarian conflicts in Muslim countries have grown acutely, not only in the Middle East, but also in South and Southeast Asia. The panel will investigate not only the religious and historical origins and bases for sectarian differences in these countries, but also the conditions that generate, exacerbate and ameliorate sectarian tensions. This panel adopts a comparative lens in exploring the different expressions, motivations of state and non-state actors in stoking sectarianism and the impact of sectarianism on state and society in both Muslim-majority and Muslim minority countries. The panel highlights how sectarianism can be a matter of state policy as seen in the examples of Malaysia where state actors employ sectarian politics to strengthen the state's legitimacy. In Pakistan, the growth of an all-female puritanical religious group has led to hardening attitudes and thinking amongst middle class Pakistani women domestically and abroad against Ahmadis, Sufis and Shiites. In the case of Bangladesh, the push for sectarianism has been led by radical Islamist groups as a tool for challenging the status quo,

in particular the syncretic form of Sufi-inspired Islam, and justifying radical contentions and mobilization. In Singapore, external influences have led to intra-sectarian contestations where Sufis are deemed as deviants by Salafis and Sufis are attempting to paint all Salafis as violent in Muslim minority Singapore. This panel brings together experts, including junior and senior scholars, and employs cross-disciplinary perspectives on a contemporary issue of scholarly and policy importance.

Session Organizer
Nawab Mohammed Osman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Chair
Nawab Mohammed Osman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Individual Submissions
Mobilizing Sectarianism in a "Strong State": Salafi and Sufi Contestations in Singapore - Nawab Mohammed Osman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Secularism vs. Sectarianism: The Dynamics of Politics, Islam and Radicalization in Bangladesh - Iftikhar Rashid, Monash University

Role of the State in Stoking Muslim Sectarianism in Malaysia - Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Intra-Muslim Competition in Southern Thailand - Ernesto Braam, Netherlands Embassy in Singapore

Discussant
Iftikhar Rashid, Monash University

Urban Religion: Constructing and Contesting Identity in Asian Cities

Sun, March 19, 8:30 to 10:30am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Concourse Level, VIP Room

Abstract

This panel examines the role of religion in constructing and contesting identity in South and Southeast Asian cities. Panelists analyze the new socio-economic, political, and cultural dynamics that have marked shifts in Asian cities and religious identity in recent years, like the rise of the Asian middle classes and religious revivals across the region. Claire-Marie Hefner's paper, "The Moral Ambiguity of the City: Islamic Education and Ethical Learning in Urban Indonesia," examines processes of moral learning and notions of "freedom" in Islamic boarding schools for girls in the city of Yogyakarta. Working in Mumbai, Reza Masoudi Nejad's paper, "The Urban Ritual: The Ritual and Counter-ritual during the Muharram in Mumbai," analyses how a "counter-ritual" among Wahabi Muslims during Muharram allows them to negotiate authority and redefine the identity of a traditionally Shi'i dominated neighborhood. In the northern Indian city of Udaipur, Jennifer Ortegren's paper, "Class as Dharma: Negotiating Hindu Morality in Urban Rajasthan," examines shifts in upwardly mobile Hindu women's everyday and religious practices to argue for how class operates as a religious category of moral being in urban neighborhoods and Joanne Waghorne's paper, "Singapore: Macrospace and Microspace," examines emerging forms of "spirituality" in domestic spaces in Singapore as a means of countering the seeming "soullessness" of the modern, secular city. Together, these papers highlight multiple ways in which urban spaces – both domestic and public – are continually redefined by religious communities and, in turn, how the shifting moral and spatial contours of the city reshape modern religious identity and belonging.

Session Organizer

Jennifer D. Ortegren, Middlebury College

Chair

Mary Hancock, University of California, Santa Barbara

Individual Submissions

The Moral Ambiguity of the City: Islamic Education and Ethical Learning in Urban Indonesia - Claire-Marie Hefner, Manhattanville College

The Urban Ritual: The Ritual and Counter-Ritual during the Muharram in Mumbai - Reza Masoudi Nejad, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity

Class as Dharma: Negotiating Hindu Morality in Urban Rajasthan - Jennifer D. Ortegren, Middlebury College

Singapore: Macrospace and Microspace - Joanne Punzo Waghorne, Syracuse University

Discussant

Mary Hancock, University of California, Santa Barbara

327. Beyond Authentication: Genealogical Authority in Colonial and Postcolonial Indonesia. Sponsored by the Indonesia and Timor-Leste Studies Committee (ITLSC)

Sun, March 19, 8:30 to 10:30am, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, Mezzanine, Birchwood Ballroom

Abstract

How have genealogical forms inscribed, maintained, or challenged political, social, and religious authority in colonial and postcolonial Indonesia? This panel addresses this question through a series of case studies, including the bilateral kinship practices of creolized Chinese families in the New Order and after, the efforts of twenty-first-century Acehnese Sufis to assemble ad hoc genealogical and mystical lineages, the role of dreams and visions in constructing non-verifiable genealogical authority among the Hadrami diaspora in Java, and the disputing of late colonial Sumatran land concessions using Batak genealogies that

incorporate collateral relatives and clan alliances.

What brings these cases of genealogical authority together is that genealogical authentication, that is, the affirming of one's identity or practice through establishing genealogical links to authoritative ancestors, is not their primary mode of signification. Rather than assume that such idioms have overcome their inability to authenticate, we aim to historicize both the grounds of their authority and the regimes of authentication against which they appear to stand.

This leads us to a series of questions at the intersection of anthropology, history, and Asian studies. How might we re-conceptualize genealogical forms as plural kinship and political idioms that incorporate multiple vectors of relationality and authority? How do the region's matrilineal and bilateral kinship forms and patterns influence genealogical authority more generally in the archipelago? What assumptions regarding genealogical authority in the so-called "world religions" might we need to reconsider? And how might the issues raised by this panel inform on-going conversations regarding genealogical and historical authority in Indonesia?

Session Organizers

Daniel Birchok, University of Michigan-Flint
Guo-Quan Seng, National University of Singapore

Chair

Daniel Birchok, University of Michigan-Flint

Individual Submissions

The Son of the Childless Saint: Oneiric Adoption and Genealogical Authority among Contemporary Indonesian Ḥaḍramī - Ismail Fajrie Alatas, New York University

Tawassul as Genealogy: A Non-Authenticating Genealogical Mode in Twenty-First Century Aceh - Daniel Birchok, University of Michigan-Flint

Name-Changing, Religious Conversion, and Genealogy Re-construction among the Chinese in Post-Independence Indonesia - Guo-Quan Seng, National University of Singapore

Genealogy as Historical Right in the Bataklands and its Malayan Diaspora, c.1870-1925 - Faizah Binte Zakaria, Yale University

Discussant

Mary M. Steedly, Harvard University

356. Middle Classes in Late-Colonial Java: Revisiting the Ancestors of a Future Nation

Sun, March 19, 10:45am to 12:45pm, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, 2nd Floor, Roosevelt

Abstract

At the beginning of the 20th century, Indonesia's nascent middle-classes became increasingly central to the maintenance of colonial rule. This interdisciplinary panel explores the new lifestyles, consumption patterns, and mass culture of this group. We approach Indonesian middle classes as a poorly understood "ethnicity". They have long been excluded from the historical record, which prioritized dominant colonial categories ("peasants", "aristocrats", "Chinese") and – in post-independence times – nationalists. As a result, their crucial role within the colonial system remains largely invisible. In redressing this imbalance, Henk Schulte Nordholt examines the visibility of Java's new mass culture as reflected in advertisements published around the 1930s, which served to help shape "modern", urban lifestyles. Tom Hoogervorst focuses on the written heritage of this period and demonstrates that vernacular Malay became the pre-eminent vehicle to articulate modernity. A concomitant development was the proliferation of fairs, in which the colonized became – simultaneously – the main participants and observers of the colonial project. Arnout van der Meer examines the character of these fairs as sites of legitimization of Dutch rule.

The fairs, visual culture and Malay-language literature foregrounded in this panel cannot be seen in disjunction from Indonesia's emerging middle classes. To appreciate their historical importance and continuities with contemporary Indonesia, we turn our attention to the ambitions, anxieties, and desires of this oft-overlooked group.

Session Organizer

Tom Gunnar Hoogervorst, KITLV

Chair

Henk Schulte Schulte Nordholt, KITLV - Leiden

Individual Submissions

Mass Culture, Modernity, Visuality: The Emergence of New Urban Middle Classes in the Netherlands Indies - Henk Schulte Schulte Nordholt, KITLV - Leiden

Unauthentic, Vulgar, Forgotten: Reappreciating Vernacular Malay Literature - Tom Gunnar Hoogervorst, KITLV

A Performance in Contrasts: Fairs, Commodities, and the Production of Difference - Arnout H.C. van der Meer, Colby College

Discussant

Nurfadzilah Yahaya, National University of Singapore